



TAQLEED

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Taqleed, the Islamic concept of following the Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen (the highest class of Fuqaha—Islamic Jurists) is being subjected to much scorn, ridicule and rejection by modernist Muslims schooled in the liberal culture of the west while being largely uneducated in terms of the Shariah. There exists also another group apart from the modernists, which has likewise considered it fashionable to argue away the vital Shar'i requirement of Taqleed. This group comes in the garb of the Ulama of Islam. They have adopted a similar attitude of rejecting Taqleed by virtue of external un-Islamic influences which they have acquired as a result of them deviating from the Path of the Sunnah. Western liberalism has undoubtedly captured their minds, hence they labour to create some kind of harmony between the rigid demands of Islam and the so-called rational dictates of modern reason. Such modern men operating under the designation of Ulama and occasionally donning even the external garments of Ulama to create a deceptive appearance of piety, pose the greatest danger to Imaan of untainted laymen. Most of the "Islamic" colleges in the Middle Eastern countries and some such Madrasahs in other parts of the world pour out members of this hybrid class of "Ulama" who find it difficult to distinguish between right and left. They are saddled with the problem of harmonizing Islam with modernism and in the process of their evil pursuit they are constrained to abandon any Islamic demand which thwarts or impedes their ungodly mission. One of the greatest impediments in the endeavour to modernise Islam to conform to western standards of reason is the Shar'i demand of Taqleed. Taqleed is a thorn in their flesh and it has to be eliminated for the attainment of their pernicious goal.

Self-conceit and self-opinion are the products of western liberalism and materialism. These diseases, gripping many Muslims in this age, have lamentably disturbed the equilibrium of Muslim intelligence. The ailing Muslim intelligence of these times has been so drastically jarred that it is incapable of discerning the dangerous abyss it is slipping into by shunning the vital and compulsory injunction of Taqleed. It fails to understand that the ultimate consequence of admitt-Taqleed (abandonment of Taqleed) is the abdication of Imaan. Those who shun Taqleed hover on the brink of kufr.

INCUMBENT

The incumbency of Taqleed is substantiated by the highest authority of Islam, viz., the Qur'aan Majeed. Allah Ta'ala declares in His Gracious Kitaab:

"Ask the people of knowledge if you do not know"

This Qur'aanic command establishes the general principle of Taqleed. The Islamic concept of Taqleed is vital for the Imaan since Imaan is based on total obedience to a transcendental Law termed the Shariah which is not the product of human reason and man's intelligence. Man's intelligence cannot discover the acts and duties which Divine Pleasure desires for its propitiation. The medium of obtaining the Pleasure of Allah Ta'ala is only by following the teachings of the Rasool (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) imparted these teachings to the Sahaabah who were obliged to adopt total Taqleed of the Nabi (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). The Sahaabah achieved the pinnacle story in all fields by means of Taqleed, not by means of pitting their own reasoning and opinions against the Divine teachings of the Deen.

THE SECOND STAGE

The second stage of Taqleed applies to the noble Taabieen or the generation succeeding the Sahaabah. This was the golden age of the Fuqaha (Islamic Jurists) who all followed faithfully in the footsteps of the Sahaabah. The illustrious Fuqaha of this glorious age achieved their lofty ranks in Islamic Knowledge and Taqwa by sitting at the feet of the Sahaabah and making Taqleed of these Students and Disciples of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). They never proffered their opinion in matters pertaining to the Shariah. They followed the Sahaabah in the way the Sahaabah followed Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). Allah Ta'ala commands in the Qur'aan:

"O People of Imaan! Obey Allah, obey the Rasool and the Ulul Amr among you."

The Ulul Amr (the leaders or those in charge of the Ummah), in the first and highest degree refers to the Sahaabah. Taqleed of the Sahaabah is essential for salvation of the Aakhirah. When even the great Fuqaha followed the Sahaabah, then by what reasoning can any

other member of the Ummah seek to discard Taqleed?

THE THIRD STAGE

The third stage of Taqleed applies to the rank and file of the Ummah. In regard to the Ummah at large the concept of Taqleed demands total obedience to the Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen or the great Fuqaha who were the sole repositories of unrestricted Ijtihad on the basis of the Qur'aan and Sunnah. After the Sahaabah, the class known as the Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen occupied the loftiest pedestal in all branches of Islamic Knowledge. Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said:

"Verily the Ulama are the Heirs of the Amblyan."

After the Sahaabah the highest candidates for this lofty Office were the Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen, men such as Imaam Abu Hanifah, Imaam Maalik, Imaam Shafi and Imaam Ahmed Bin Hambal (rahmatullah alayhim). When Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) has appointed men of this calibre to be his Representatives to bear the Standard of the Shariah and to guide the Ummah, then it does not behove any Ummati to become so self-conceited and arrogantly arrogate to himself the right of discarding the garland of Taqleed.

AIM OF TAQLEED

The aim of Taqleed is total Ittiba' (total obedience to the Law of Allah Ta'ala). Taqleed means to follow. To achieve obedience to Allah Ta'ala, Taqleed is a vital requirement. The masses in the Ummah can never attain total Ittiba' of Allah and Rasool without resorting to Taqleed of the Fuqaha. Thus, negation of Taqleed leads to negation of Ittiba'. Ordinary Muslims are deluded by the spiritually dangerous rhetoric and reasoning of the proponents of liberalism. The negators of Taqleed endeavour to put across the idea that Taqleed is a superfluity and an accretion in Islam. But, Taqleed is imperative for the safety of Imaan. In the absence of Taqleed, the nafs of man steps in and misleads him by exposing him to the vagaries, desires and the evil promptings of shaitaan. On the contrary, Taqleed holds the Mu'min securely on the Path of Rectitude.

Through the avenue of Taqleed, the lowly desire in man is thwarted. Whether the decree of Allah suits him or not, he is bound to offer his

total obedience since he has chosen the Path of Taqleed of the illustrious authorities of Islam. In contrast, the free-lancer—the one who picks and chooses—makes Taqleed of another sort. He follows his nafs—his desires—and drifts further and further from the Path of Haqq. He lands in Dhalaal (deviation) which takes him towards kufr and destruction of Imaan.

THE ULAMA

The vital importance of Taqleed may be gauged from the fact that even great Ulama of the calibre of Imaam Ghazaali and even greater such as Imaam Abu Yusuf were Muqallids. They followed a particular Math-hab and obeyed the higher authorities of the Shariah. But, puny and insignificant men hardly possessing a smattering of Islamic knowledge which they obtained from unreliable sources, today advocate abandonment of Taqleed.

DECEPTION

Those who seek to abandon Taqleed are dwelling in self-deception. They deceive themselves into believing that they possess adequate ability and qualification to embark on the process of deducting Shar'i Masaa-il. But, they grope lamentably in darkness. There is not a single rule which they are capable of deducting without resort to the works of this or that Imaam. If it is a matter of Fiqh, they are constrained to refer to the works of the Fuqaha. If it is about Tafseer they have to refer to some work of the Mufasssireen. If it is a question pertaining to Hadith, they have no option other than making Taqleed of the Hadith Kitaabs of such Ulama who themselves were Muqallideen (followers of Imaams). In order to ascertain the authenticity of a Hadith, there is no alternative other than making Taqleed of the Aimmah-e-Hadith. At no stage can anyone be independent of Taqleed. But, the negators of Taqleed dupe themselves by seeking to satisfy their desires in flitting from Math-hab to Math-hab—picking and choosing rules and opinions which conform to their whimsical desires and fancies.

The votaries of admu-taqleed (abandonment of Taqleed) consider it below their dignity to be hitched to any particular Math-hab of the Shariah, they advocate a policy of picking and choosing from the

various Math-habs, when it suits them they accept a Mas'alah from the Hanafi Math-hab, when the Mas'alah in the Shaafi Math-hab appears more in consonance with laxity and desire, they switch over to that Math-hab, when something more appeasing is discerned in the Maaliki Math-hab, they opt for that Mas'alah. They wonder aimlessly in this deception deluding themselves. They fail to understand that even in their unlawful policy of *talfeeq* (jumping from Math-hab to Math-hab), they have to follow the Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen. The indispensability of the Fuqaha is accepted even by the opponents of the Imaams, albeit in an implied and subtle way. They are totally incapable of formulating a single Mas'alah without resorting to aid from the illustrious authorities among the Fuqaha, Muhadditheen and Mufasssireen. But, they childishly trumpet the bugle of the validity of *talfeeq*, a conception which is unanimously unlawful.

The Shar'i Masaa-il handed down by the Fuqaha were not products of unfettered opinion. The masaa-il were obtained in the following ways:

(1) From highly reliable Ustaads whose academic, intellectual and spiritual Chains were linked directly to Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). Furthermore, the Chain between these illustrious authorities of Islam and Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) was extremely short in that this golden Chain consisted of very few links. It was the noblest of times closest to Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam)—a time designated by Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) as "Khairul Quroon" (The best of times). The Masaa-il of Deen were consequently obtained directly from the Sahaabah or the disciples of the Sahaabah.

(2) On the basis of principles (Usool) formulated by the Sahaabah. Such principles were received by the Fuqaha by way of authentic narration. The short span of time between the Fuqaha and the Sahaabah was predominant in ensuring the authenticity and reliability of the Chain of Narration.

(3) On the basis of Usool (Principles) which the Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen derived directly from the Qur'aan and Sunnah. Unfettered reason and individual opinion and fancy had absolutely no

role in the Masaa-il of Deen prepared by the Fuqaha for the benefit of posterity.

THEIR MISSION

The nature of the work which Islam had entrusted to these noble souls and the stupendous treasure of Islamic sciences prepared by them convince all sincere followers of Islam that the Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen were a class created by Allah Ta'ala for the specific task of systematizing the Shariah and handing it over in a simplified form to the Ummah for all time to come. Their monumental works bear ample testimony to their greatness. To this day they remain unparalleled in the fields of Islam which were their missions. Thus, without the slightest fear of contradiction, can it be loudly claimed that after the age of the Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen there never appeared the likes of them. After the age of the Muhadditheen, there never appeared the likes of them. After the age of the Mufasssireen, there never appeared the likes of them. Great men came in all ages and indeed every age will witness great men. But the likes of the Aimmah were never again seen nor will there ever be men of such high calibre. The greatest among the Ulama in this age and in all future ages will always be compelled to resort to the works of the Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen. The principles of the Shariah enunciated by them are indispensable. Even such sheikhs and molvies who have gone astray and are advocating the abandonment of Math-habs, find themselves hemmed in by the new developments and phenomena which require Shar'i rulings. They are compelled against their desires to resort to the principles and rulings of the Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen. They will then proceed on a spree of picking and choosing from the various rulings of the Aimmah. But in this process they are steered on by desire. Their decisions are not governed by the Principles of the Shariah. They employ unbridled and defective reasoning in isolation of the Principles of the Shariah. Such deviated men while propagating the abandonment of Taqlid imply by their own rulings and opinions that the rank and file of the Ummah should follow them. They are caught up in an obnoxious attitude of self-deception in that they expect ordinary Muslims to sacrifice the superior Taqlid of the Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen and adopt the baseless Taqlid of the deviated sheikhs and muftis of this time—learned men who have lost their Islamic

bearings and dwell in the darkness of compound ignorance.

THE PATH OF ALLAH

Those who are plodding the path of dhalal (deviation) scorn at the designations of Hanafi, Shaafi'i, Maaliki and Hambali. They sarcastically pose the question:

"Where in the Qur'aan and Hadith is it stated that Muslims are Hanafis, Shaafi'is, Maalikis and Hambalis?"

Similar such stupid questions are asked by those who have drifted from Siraatul Mustaqeem and are now following the path of shaitaan. One does not require great intelligence to understand the reason for these designations which most assuredly are not in conflict with Islam. The true and only Path for the Mu'min is the Path of Allah. But, Allah Himself attributes His Path to certain of His beloved slaves. He states in the Qur'aan Majeed:

"Follow the Path of those who turn towards Me."

In this ayat Allah Ta'ala does not say: "My Path". He says: "*Sabeela man anaaba ilayya*" (The Path of those who turn towards Me)." Elsewhere in the Qur'aan, Allah Ta'ala designates His Path with the title: "*Millate-e-Ibraaheem*". There is therefore nothing Islamically wrong in relating the Path of Allah to any Islamic personality who acts as the medium of guidance.

The Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen were the personalities who expounded the Shariah and simplified the Road of Guidance leading towards Allah Ta'ala. Those who follow their Ustaad, Imaam Abu Hanifah are thus called Hanafis while those who follow Imaam Shaafi'i are called Shaafi'is. The relationship to any particular Imaam is merely by virtue of acceptance of his exposition of the Law of Allah Ta'ala. By following the Math-hab (Path) indicated by an Imaam, we are able to travel along the Path of Truth leading to Allah Ta'ala. In submitting to the rules of an uprighteous and highly qualified authority of the Shariah we are effectively thwarting our lower desire (nafs) and by casting aside our whimsical opinions and fancies we strive with sincerity in Allah's Path to attain His Pleasure. In the ayat cited above, Allah Ta'ala commands Taqleed of the

Aimmah in categoric terms. He says:

"Follow the Path of those who follow Me."

In other words: Make Taqleed of the authorities of the Shariah. It is only the Path of these great men of Islam which leads towards Allah Ta'ala. Allah commands that we adopt Taqleed of those whose Path leads towards Him. But men gone astray and lost in deception advocate that the Ummah abandon "*Sabeela man anaabi ilayya*"—The Path of those who turn towards Me.

Indeed it is most ludicrous for the Ummah to accept that after being hitched to Taqleed for fourteen centuries, right from the time of the Sahaabah, men in this belated era have discerned the superfluity of this concept and that Allah Ta'ala can be reached by abandoning what is sacred and what has been proven to be authentic. The Path of Taqleed is the Rope of Allah (*Hablullah*). Whoever allows this Rope to slip from his hands, loses himself in baatil.

NAMES

The intransigent demand by ghair-muqallideen (those who have abandoned the Taqleed of the Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen) that we produce from the Qur'aan or Hadith evidence to uphold the correctness of the Taqleed of Abu Hanifah, Shaafi'i, Maalik and Hambal is made merely to confuse and mislead Muslims.

Let us ask these deviates: Where in the Qur'aan or Hadith is it stated that we should accept and follow Imaam Bukhaari and Imaam Muslim (rahmatullah alayhimaa)? Ghair Muqallideen cite copiously from the works of these two authorities to bolster their baseless claims against the Muqallideen. These ghair muqallideen are rendered helpless for want of independent Shar'i evidence to support their claims. They can only cite Hadith which appear in the Kitaabs of the Aimmah-e-Hadith. Again we ask: What constrains us then to make Taqleed of the Ahadith which appear in Bukhaari, etc.?

Those who seek to shed Taqleed should abstain from attempting to substantiate their claims on the basis of Ahadith which are extracted from Bukhaari or Muslim. If they cannot accept the stamp of authority of the Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen, they should not expect others to accept as stamps of authority the sources which they (the ghair muqallideen) tender. The renouncers of Taqleed advance in their support Ahadith which they have gleaned from sources which appeared centuries after

Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) whereas the Masaa-il propagated by the Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen are based on the sources in the closest proximity to Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). The ghair muqallideen cite from Bukhaari and Muslim while the Muqallideen narrate from the Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen whose Ustaads were the Taabi-een and the Sahaabah. The fallacy of their propagations against Taqleed should now be manifest.

TAQLEED—AN OBLIGATORY CONCEPT

The whole superstructure of Islam has been raised neatly and expertly on the foundations of the Qur'aan and Sunnah by the noble Fuqaha of Islam. About such Fuqaha, Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said:

“A single Faqeeh is harder on shaitaan
than a thousand Aabids.”

An Aabid is a pious worshipper—one who spends the greater part of his time in ibaadat—who is aware of the necessary rules pertaining to his ibaadat and daily life. An Aabid does not refer to an ignorant worshipper.

After the Sahaabah, the Fuqahaa are the first true Heirs and Representatives of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said:

“The Ulama are the Heirs of the Ambiyaa.”

This conception stated in this hadith applies in the first instance and in the highest category to the Fuqaha of Islam. Thus, the service rendered to the Fuqaha to the Ummah can never be compensated by the Ummah. No Muslim can ever be independent of the Fuqaha and following the Matha-hib formulated by the Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen. One who attempts to stray from the Path of the Math-habs, deviates into destruction. In the words of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam),

“He deviates into the fire”

CHANGING MATH-HAB

On account of widespread ignorance of Deeni Knowledge among ordinary Muslims coupled to the misguidance offered by evil worldly Ulama, many people believe that it is lawful to switch Math-habs for the sake of marriage. If a Hanafi marries a Shaafi'i or vice versa, it is thought expedient for the one party to change to the Math-hab of the other partner. The baseless ground of compatibility is advanced for this serious act of deviation from the Haqq.

It should be well understood that changing Math-habs for the sake of marriage is not permissible. The Fuqaha have expressed the fear that one who does so, may lose his Imaan at the time of death. It is, therefore, imperative that both husband and wife adhere to their respective Math-hab. Difference of Math-hab does not produce incompatibility. Broadmindedness and understanding are required. Followers of one Math-hab of Haqq must respect the followers of another Math-hab.

DANGERS OF NON-TAQLEED

It is established by experience and observation that in this age most people are governed by selfishness, baneful motives, dominating desire, lust, insincerity, mischief, strife, anarchy, opposition to the consensus of the Ahle Haqq, and subjection of the Deen to desire. This is manifest and self-evident. The Ahadith on Fitan (Strife) have forewarned us of the rise of these baneful traits in man. The Ulama are well aware of this. For this reason, in the absence of *Taqleed Shakhshi*, the greatest of harm, mischief, disruption and corruption will reign in the Deen.

A destructive evil which will rear its head in the absence of *Taqleed Shakhshi* is self-appointed mujtahids. Some persons will consider themselves to be mujtahids and embark on the process of Qiyas (Shar'i analogical reasoning). They will consider

themselves on par with the illustrious Mujtahideen of the early ages of Islam. It will be said - and this has already been the case - that the previous Mujtahideen have reliably stated that some laws are based on certain causes (i.e. they are *Mu-al-lal*). Citing this, some modernist has claimed that the command of Wudhu for Salaat is *Mu-al-lal*, it being the consequence of the early Arabs being camel-herds and goat-herds. Since their occupation of tending animals exposed them constantly to impurities, the command for Wudhu was formulated. On this basis they claim that since people of the present live in environments and occupations of greater hygienic conditions, Wudhu is no longer necessary for Salaat. They conclude thus, the permissibility of Salaat without Wudhu.

Similarly, it is claimed (by such self-styled mujtahids) that the Wujub of witnesses in the Nikah ceremony is *Mu-al-lal*, the need of witnesses being occasioned by the exigency of a dispute which may arise in the future. The presence of witnesses will facilitate in resolving a dispute between the contending marriage parties. On this basis they conclude that where there exists no danger of dispute, the Nikah will be valid without witnesses.

In a like manner it will be claimed that practices abrogated by the consensus of the Ummat (*Mansukh bil Ijma'*) are not annulled. On this basis they will claim the permissibility of Mut'ah (temporary marriage). Such will be the violent contradictions and interpolations introduced into the Deen by the unqualified so-called mujtahids.

Which law is *Mu-al-lal* (based on a cause with an *il'-lat* -cause) which could be employed in the transference (*ta'diyah*) of a command which could be effected from the *Maqees Alayh* (original premiss) to the *Maqees* (the second premiss or branch in the process of analogical reasoning), and which law is a *Hukm Ta-abbudi* (a command having no apparent cause, i.e. it is *Ghair*

Mu-al-lal)? This is the function of the accepted *A-imma Mujtahideen* who were men of the greatest ability, piety, sincerity, free from selfish motives and lowly desire. They were men who had achieved total annihilation of the lowly self. This ability of Ijtihad was their exclusive prerogative which ceased with the passing of these stars in the firmament of Islamic Knowledge.

Another evil resulting from the discarding of *Taqleed Shakhsi* is to practice in accordance with the exoteric (Zaahir) facade of certain Ahadith, whereas such practice is most certainly not lawful. Since the discarding of *Taqleed Shakhsi* feels himself unchecked and unfettered he follows the dictates of his nafs. An example of this type of hadith is:

"Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) performed Zuhr and Asr together and Maghrib and Isha together without (the expediency) of fear and journey."

(Muslim Shareef)

At face value, the hadith indicates the permissibility of performing Zuhr and Asr as well as Maghrib and Isha even if there exists no valid reason for this practice.

But, without any doubt, the unification of Salaat without reason is not held permissible by any authority. The correct meaning of the hadith is arrived at by *ta'weel* (interpretation) via the faculty of *Ijtihad*. Practice in accordance with the mere external facade of the words in such cases will result in opposition to *Ijma'*. (consensus of the Ummat) and such conflict is *haraam*.

One who has discarded Taqleed even if he does not resort to Ijtihad himself, nor follow the meaning conveyed superficially by the words, will in difficult *Masa-il* accept the verdict of any authority. He will at times follow one Imaam and at times another. In this way he will sometimes practice in opposition to *Ijma'* and on occasions even if the result is not in conflict with

Ijma he will resort to the verdict which appeals to his whim and fancy and by means of which worldly motives are attainable. Thus, he will submit the Deen to the dictates of the Nafs. We seek Allah's protection from such deviation.

The man whose nafs becomes desensitized by such habitual mental freedom will after a while transgress the limits of the detailed rules and trespass into the realm of the fundamentals (Usul). The spiritual disaster ensuing in this event is colossal. This danger is not remote. In fact its arising is overwhelming and dominant.

The summary of what has been said is: *Taqleed Shakhsi* is the basis for a waajib aspect (viz. acting in accordance with the commands of the Shariat) and the basis of a Waajib is also Waajib hence *Taqleed Shakhsi* is likewise Waajib.

At this juncture it may be said: What is the proof for the claim that the basis of Waajib is also Waajib? The answer to this question is: This is an universally accepted and self-evident principle. It is a principle espoused by the intelligence of all people and nations. Hence, it stands in no need of substantiation. Nevertheless, purely as a favour, a hadith in substantiation is presented here.

Uqbah Bin Ameer narrates:

"I heard Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) say: Verily, whoever learnt archery then discarded it, is not of us (or verily, he has sinned)." (Muslim)

This hadith reprimands those who have discarded archery after having acquired its practice. Obviously, archery is not among the pure and intended ibaadat of the Deen, but since on occasions it forms the basis for a Waajib command, viz. *I'la Kalimatul-lah* (elevating the Word of Allah by means of Jihad), the warning upon its neglect has been sounded. This reprimand indicates

Wujub (of the practice of archery) when occasion demands. This suffices to prove that the basis of Waajib is also Waajib. Thus, *Taqleed Shakhsi* is proven and authentic.

THE CONVERT'S MATH-HAB

What is the Shariah's ruling regarding one who embraces Islam in relation to following a particular Math-hab? And, what Math-hab is to be adopted by one who changes from his condition of non-Taqleed to Taqleed?

Such persons shall adopt the Math-hab which is dominant in their regions. If in their regions are more than one Math-hab, all of which are on an equal footing as far as following is concerned, then these persons may choose any Math-hab of their choice. Once they have adopted a particular Math-hab, they will be obliged to adhere to that Math-hab. After having chosen a Math-hab, it is not permissible to switch to another Math-hab for any worldly motive and personal desire.

DOMINANT MATH-HAB

In cases where it is difficult to act in accordance with one's Math-hab due to a dearth of Ulama of one's Math-hab, it will be obligatory to adopt the prevailing dominant Math-hab.

FOUR MATH-HABS?

There were numerous Mujtahideen. It may, therefore be argued that Taqleed of any Mujtahid should suffice. Why then emphasise on the four Math-habs? Why restrict Taqleed to the four Matha-hib?

Adoption of different verdicts leads to anarchy. It is, therefore, imperative to make Taqleed of a Math-hab which has been so formulated and arranged in regard to principles (Usul) and details (Furu') that answers to all questions could be obtained either in a specific form or in a deducted form based on principles, thereby

obviating the need to refer to an external source. This all-embracing quality, by an act of Allah Ta'ala, is found existing in only the four Math-habs. It is, therefore, essential to adopt one of the four Math-habs. This has been the accepted practice coming down the ages from the early times in an unbroken chain of authentic and authoritative transmission—from generation to generation.

THE INCUMBENCY OF TAQLEED

(1) It should be remembered that the two senior Imaams, namely, Imaam Abu Hanifah and Imaam Maalik were in touch with Sahaabah. They had acquired their Islamic knowledge from Sahaabah as well as from numerous such senior Scholars who had studied under the Sahaabah. They were in close proximity to the age of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). Secondly, the protection of the Qur'aan and Islam were undertaken by Allah Ta'ala Himself, He declares in the Qur'aan: "Verily, We revealed the Thikr (Qur'aan) and We are its Protectors." Thus the preservation of Islam is a Divine Responsibility. At no stage in the history of Islam was there a time that the full Shariah was not available. Islam was perfected during the time of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). The Qur'aan is emphatic and explicit in making this claim. It is, therefore, Islamically unimaginable that the full and perfect Shariah did not exist with the illustrious Scholars until a couple centuries later when Imaam Bukhaari (rahmatullah alayh) appeared on the scene. Imaam Bukhaari appeared about 120 years after Imaam Abu Hanifah and about 200 years after Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). During this period, i.e. during the office of Imaam Bukhaari, the Deen was flourishing. Every aspect of Islam was known to the Scholars. Nothing was hidden and unknown. It is a ludicrous and a kufr supposition to assume that part of the Shariah was concealed from or unknown to the Salf-e-Saaliheen of the first epoch of Quroon-e- Thalathah (The first three noble

ages of Islam), and that the supposed 'unknown' portion became known only after Imaam Bukhaari (rahmatullah alayh) appeared on the scene two centuries later. This supposition is kufr because it militates against the Qur'aanic declaration of:

- (1) The perfection of the Deen
- (2) The Divine Protection of the Deen undertaken by Allah Azza Wa Jal, Himself.

Thirdly, Imaam Bukhaari and the other Muhadditheen who compiled the Ahadith in book form did not do so for the benefit of the existing Scholars or for the Scholars before his time. The Scholars before his era were illustrious Fuqaha and Muhadditheen who were the direct students of the Sahaabah or of the Students of the Sahaabah. The Scholars of this time were his (Imaam Bukhaari's) Ustaadhs and these Scholars were the Students of the Taabieen who in turn were the Students of the Sahaabah. Thus, it was Imaam Bukhaari who benefited from these illustrious Ustaadhs, not the other way around. The compilations of the Muhadditheen were for the benefit of posterity—for the Muslims of later generations. The Scholars before Imaam Bukhaari and those during his time were not at all reliant on his compilations. They were completely independent of the Hadith compilations of the later Muhadditheen. The authorities on whom the Scholars (Fuqaha and Muhadditheen) before Imaam Bukhaari's time relied were Taabieen and Sahaabah. Their knowledge of Islam was firsthand and did not depend on compilations and books. Their Ilm was from the Taabieen whose base of knowledge was the Sahaabah who were Rasulullah's (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) Students. The nonsense gorged out by the modernist and deviant Salafis of this age who blindly follow the half-baked so-called scholar, Al-Albaani is thus self-evident.

Fourthly, it is a well-known fact that the teaching of Imaam Abu Hanifah as well as of the other Imaams (Fuqaha) was that if an authentic Hadith is acquired with which his ruling conflicts, then

such a ruling should be discarded and the ruling stated in the Hadith be accepted. It was made clear that the Math-hab of the Hadith was his (i.e. Abu Hanifah's) Math-hab. Thus, if and whenever any of the Scholars who follow Imaam Abu Hanifah acquired a Hadith which in their opinion their Ustaad did not know of, immediately the ruling of the Ustaad on the specific issue would be adjusted to conform to the Hadith. But, this process of adjusting such rulings which could have been in conflict with the Hadith on account of all the Ahadith not having reached a particular Imaam, and long before Imaam Bukhaari presented his compilation. We, therefore, find the Mutakh-khireen (i.e. the Hanafi Fuqaha of the third and fourth centuries) adhering to the rulings which the Hanafi Fuqaha of former times had issued despite them having the knowledge of all Compilations of Hadith prepared by the Muhadditheen. This in itself, is explicit evidence for the fact that the Fuqaha before Imaam Bukhaari were already fully apprized of the various Ahadith which the later Muhadditheen compiled in their Books. Undoubtedly, the Sahaabah had scattered throughout the Islamic Empire. But, long before the Hadith compilations of Imaam Bukhaari, the Scholars had already become aware of the Ahadith narrated by the different Sahaabah. The age adjacent to the age of the Sahaabah was an age of intense Islamic learning. The entire Shariah with its jurisprudence (Fiqh) was systematized and codified long before the age of the Muhadditheen. Such systematization and codification are impossible without a total knowledge of Hadith because Hadith is the Tafseer of the Qur'aan. Without Hadith, there can be no Shariah. Thus, the Shariah which the Fuqaha had systematized was the Shariah which the Sahaabah had acquired from Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). Just as the Sahaabah were not reliant on written books for the knowledge and recital of the Qur'aan, so too the next group of Scholars (the Taabieen) was not reliant on any book of Hadith for the systematization of the Shariah. Just as the Sahaabah had the Qur'aan in their memories, so too did the Taabieen have the Ahadith in their memories. Islamic history bears ample testimony to this incontrovertible fact. The aim of the Muhadditheen was to sift out the

narrations and to prepare books of authentic compilations for the benefit of posterity just as was the aim of the Sahaabah when they had compiled the Qur'aan in book form. The aim was not to benefit the Sahaabah because they were not in need of a book or a written compilation of the Qur'aan. They had the Qur'aan in their memories. The Sahaabah had compiled the Qur'aan in book form for the benefit of posterity. From this it should be realised that Imaam Bukhaari's compilation was not for the benefit of the existing Scholars as they were in fact the instructors of Imaam Bukhaari. It is quite possible that the Fuqaha and Muhadditheen prior to Imaam Bukhaari had greater knowledge of Hadith and had a greater advantage in regard to the knowledge of authentic Hadith. The chain of narrators between Imaam Bukhaari and the Sahaabah is very long. In view of numerous narrators in a chain on account of the large time gap, it is possible that a Hadith which was authentic according to Imaam Abu Hanifah or Imaam Maalik became 'weak' in terms of the standard employed by Imaam Bukhaari. Imaam Maalik heard a Hadith directly from the lips of a Sahaabi. The authenticity was most perfect. However, the same Hadith could have reached Imaam Bukhaari two centuries later in a slightly different form or in the same form but with a long chain of narrators. Some of the narrators may not have passed Imaam Bukhaari's strict test, hence he would be compelled to classify the Hadith as 'weak' whilst in actual fact it is an authentic Hadith. Thus, if Imaam Abu Hanifah, for example, bases a ruling on the strength of a Hadith which according to Imaam Bukhaari is a 'weak' narration, the ruling of Imaam Abu Hanifah cannot be rejected on the basis of the designation given to the Hadith by Imaam Bukhaari because Imaam Abu Hanifah and all the early Scholars would not formulate rulings on suspect narrations nor were they reliant of the type of categorization of Hadith formulated by the later Muhadditheen.

(2) It is baseless to claim that the Math-habs came into existence in the middle of the 8th century of the Christian era. People who lack understanding in the Deen make such preposterous allegations. Since the Scholars taught nothing other than the SUNNAH of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam), it is incorrect to claim that the Mathaahib were later accretions. It is inconceivable that the Fuqaha taught anything which was not taught by the Sahaabah. Yes, new rulings on

new developments had to be formulated. But, such rulings were based on the principles enshrined in the Qur'aan and the Sunnah. The Fuqaha simply arranged everything in systematic order. The differences in the various acts of Ibaadat, for example, had all existed during the very time of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). The Scholars did not introduce the different ways we find in the acts of worship of the followers of the Mathaahib. Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) and the Sahaabah had adopted these ways and forms which were passed on to the succeeding generation, viz., the Taabieen, who in turn passed it on to the next generation. The problem the Fuqaha had was to establish which way and which manner of the Holy Nabi (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) and the Sahaabah were the final acts abrogating former acts. In such issues differences arose. Qur'aanic and Hadith interpretations had to be resorted to for finding solutions or the clear-cut rulings of the Sahaabah who had happened to be the Ustaadhs of a particular line of Scholars, were adopted. Whatever had happened and whichever way was adopted, it is absurd to claim that numerous of the Hadith which reached Imaam Bukhaari did not reach the Fuqaha and that the Mathaahib had been formulated on the basis of insufficient Hadith narrations. Such a claim is utterly baseless. In fact, it militates against the explicit Qur'aanic declaration:

"This day have I perfected for you your Deen"

When a Scholar acquires the knowledge of an authentic Hadith he does not dismiss that Hadith simply because the Hadith conflicts with the ruling of the Math-hab he happens to be following. He first examines the standard of the Hadith. If it is established that the Hadith is Saheeh (Authentic), he fully accepts it as being authentic. A man who rejects an authentic Hadith commits kufr. He is not a Muslim. If there are no Qur'aanic and Hadith proofs to conflict with the authentic Hadith which he has acquired, he immediately adopts the ruling of the Hadith and sets aside the ruling of the Math-hab which was earlier formulated on the basis of insufficient proof and facts. But, if there is strong and overwhelming Qur'aanic and Hadith evidence conflicting with the authentic Hadith which he had just acquired, he is forced to assign suitable interpretation to the Hadith and while accepting its authenticity, he cannot issue a ruling on its basis. But, this process had applied during the age of the Fuqaha-in the age of the Taabieen when

the Sahaabah were involved in spreading the Deen. It did not apply to the age after Imaam Bukhaari. It must be categorically stated that the Fuqaha had the knowledge of all the Ahadith which are today found in the various Hadith compilations. In fact, they had greater knowledge in the field of Hadith authenticity and in view of there being hardly any links between them and the Sahaabah.

(3) All the Usool of the Mathaahib were formulated on the basis of the Qur'aan and Hadith. Those Scholars who followed the Usool of a particular Math-hab were obliged to adhere to the Usool. They could differ in the Furoo' (details) but, the Furoo' which they formulated were based on the same Usool. Such differences largely pertain to new developments, not to clear teachings which were acquired from the Sahaabah. The Usool were established by the 'Founding' Imaams. Their students adopted these principles and formulated rulings for new developments on the basis of the principles established by their senior Ustaadhs.

(4) While Ijtihaad in the principles is no longer permissible, Ijtihaad in new developmmts will remain valid until the Last Day. There will always be new developments. The Usool established by the early Fuqaha on the basis of the Qur'aan and Sunnah are all-encompassing. It is not possible to create any further Usool because such an attempt will be in conflict with the Qur'aan and Sunnah. Any new attempt will be beyond the confines of the Qur'aan and Sunnah. Hence no one has ever ventured to establish new Usool. If today anyone attempts, his kufr will be transparent as the conflict between his conjectured 'usool' and the Qur'aan will be conspicuous. Nowadays people simply resort to baseless interpretation (*Ta'weel Baatil*) to gain acceptance for their Baatil views.

(5) New issues and new developments do not require any new Usool. The very same Usool which the early Fuqaha had extracted from the Qur'aan and Sunnah are the only basis on which rulings for new issues have to be formulated. Discardence of the USOOL of the Fuqaha is tantamount to discardence of Islam.

(6) Yes, Scholars who were students did differ with their illustrious

Ustaadhs in matters of Furoo'. While both the Ustaad and the student would argue a certain issue (*fara'*) on the basis of the same principle which the Ustaad had established, they would sometimes come to different conclusions. This is essentially the result of difference in understanding, difference in taqwa, difference in their respective bonds with Allah Ta'ala. And, it could be the result of differences in their respective experience pertaining to the issue. Also sometimes, the Student will differ with the ruling which was issued by the Imaam because circumstances had changed-new facts had come to light which had not existed at the time the Imaam had issued his ruling. In short, there were a variety of factors which determined differences in rulings inspite of the rulings being based on the same Usool. Take for example the issue of shrimps. This is a mas'ala pertaining to the Furoo'. All the Hanafi Fuqaha are agreed on the principle that of the sea animals only fish is halaal. There is no difference in this principle. However, some Hanafi Ulama have ruled that shrimps are permissible while the overwhelming majority states that shrimps are haraam. Those who say that shrimps are permissible, do not reject the principle. But, in terms of their knowledge they claim that shrimps are fish, hence, halaal. They do not claim the permissibility of shrimps on the basis of the principle of another Math-hab. Simply on account of their knowledge of shrimps, which they believe to be fish, they state that shrimps are halaal. They thus do not differ in the principles.

(7) The Scholars never reasoned that all possible issues were already addressed and that there would be no longer need for formulating rulings on later developments. The unanimity is in the closing of the doors of Ijtihad in respect to the Usool, not to new developments which obviously will come into being from time to time. But, the principles are established already for the formulation of the rulings necessary to categorize new issues and developments

(8) The Shar'i meaning of Taqleed, means to follow a particular Imaam in all matters pertaining to the Shariah.

Ittiba' means to follow in obedience. One may accept the Taqleed of a particular Imaam without applying ittiba, in practical life. Example. A man making Taqleed of Imaam Abu Hanifah, accepts and believes shrimps to be haraam. But, when he goes to a friend's home (who may

not be a Hanafi), he eats shrimps. He says that he follows (makes Taqleed) of Imaam Abu Hanifah and that he knows the view of Imaam Abu Hanifah is correct and that he accepts this, but simply to appease his friend he eats shrimps. Thus, while making Taqleed, he is not making ittiba.

(9) In all ages there were people of baatil who attempted to subvert the Deen. This process of conflict between Haqq and Baatil will endure as long as the world endures. The conspiracies of baatil are more rife and rampant in our day. Almost every Tom, Dick and Harry who has studied some Hadith translations or has a couple of kuffaar university degrees behind his name thinks himself capable of making Ijtihad in even the Usool. May Allah Ta'ala save us from such deviation.

(10) The Fuqaha of the early times did not close the Door of Ijtihad in respect to the Usool because unqualified persons attempted to make inroad into this domain. The Doors were closed because they were 100% certain that no new Usool can any longer be established since the Usool which they had established were all-encompassing. For sum certitude a very high degree of Taqwa and spiritual elevation are imperative. These men were not only men of book knowledge. Their knowledge was true knowledge which is a Noor (Celestial Light). The Islamic definition of Knowledge given by the illustrious Ulama is: ILM (KNOWLEDGE) which is a Noor in the heart of the Mu'min. The Noor is acquired from the lanterns in the Niches of Nubuwwat. True knowledge initiated from the heart of the Nabi and it passed on from breast to breast. From the breast of the Sahaabah to the breasts of the Taabieen, and so on until it has reached us. Such Noor alters the heart only after the Bond with Allah Ta'ala has been rectified, developed and solidified.

(11) A Muqallid who claims to follow the Sunnah while differing with the ruling of his Math-hab deceives himself by believing that he is following the Sunnah. Following the Sunnah is not possible beyond the confines of the Math-hab. The authorities of the Math-hab were fully aware of the Ahadith which allegedly conflict with the rulings of the Math-hab. They had the necessary knowledge pertaining to such affairs. It is, therefore, a shaitani deception for the Muqallid,

especially weak Muqallideen such as us in this belated age, to believe that we are following the Sunnah while we reject the rulings of the Aimmah.

(12) The opinions of the Aimmah do not contradict the Hadith. It is our limited knowledge and total inability which make us believe that the opinions of the Aimmah conflict with certain Ahadith. There are valid and Shar'i explanations and interpretations for any apparent conflict. We in this day are not in a position to fully understand all the different facts which had produced the opinions of the Aimmah. The reliable Ahadith are not rejected. They are accepted, but the relevant facts pertaining to the reliable Hadith in question are stated.

(13) Any difference which the Students of Imaam Abu Hanifah had with him on issues of detail, e.g. raising the hands, etc., was not in conflict with the Usool. While they were of such standing that they could resort to such differences in view of the on-going process of Hadith transmission in their time, we in this time cannot act in the same way on the basis of our defective knowledge of Islamic sciences. We simply have to follow the rulings of the Jamhoor of the Math-hab.

(14) The incumbent duty of the Muqallid is not only Taqleed, but Ittiba'. We have to make Ittiba' of the Jamhoor of the Math-hab. If we don't, we are bound to fall into deviation. The first step into the path of deviation is to abandon Ittiba'. Once shaitaan has made us accustomed to abandon Ittiba' the ground will become fertile to reject Taqleed. The modernist Salafis have fallen into this Satanic trap.

(15) It is dangerous for the masses to seek answers from the Books of Fiqh in which appear Ikhtilaafat (difference of opinion) and Dalaa-il. The masses on account of lacking totally in higher Islamic knowledge will become confused. They should adhere to books which teach the masaa'il for practical purposes.

(16) Without following a particular Math-hab, a person is bound to stray into deviation. He will follow his desires. It is, therefore, incumbent to follow a Specific Math-hab.

(17) Picking and choosing rulings from the different Math-habs, is the product of desire. The nafs constrains a person to adopt such an exercise. No Math-hab permits this. However, where there is a real need for adopting a ruling of another Math-hab, the Ulama will study the circumstances and incorporate such a ruling into the Math-hab on the basis of the Usool of the Math-hab. Picking and choosing at random and desire is to trifle with the Deen. Such trifling can lead to the destruction of Imaan.

(18) An exercise to modify the Math-habs will imply the initiation of a fifth Math-hab. Since the rulings of the Math-habs are based on Dalaa-il and certain Dalaa-il are the product of interpretation, unification is not possible. There are and will always be differences among the Scholars who are Muqallids of the same Math-hab. Furthermore, such an attempt is uncalled for. Differences in the Math-hab never lead to disunity and conflict. Ignorance leads to disunity and conflict. We are taught to respect all the four Math-habs. Although we are followers of the Hanafi Math-hab, we always insist that followers of the other Math-habs adhere strictly to the ruling and teachings of their respective Math-habs. The belief of the followers of all Math-habs is that the Four Math-habs are on the Haqq because their basis is the Qur'aan and the Sunnah. While conceding that errors are possible and that errors in opinion have been committed, no Math-hab can be branded as baatil or in deviation. Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said: "The differences of my Ummah are a blessing". Such differences existed among the Sahaabah also. These differences of the Sahaabah were inherited by the Students of the different Sahaabah, hence the differences in the Math-habs. The Math-habs do not advocate sectarianism or antagonism among the followers of the different Math-habs as the deviant, anti-Math-hab Salafis of this age claim. We see such antagonism only in the ranks of the ignorant ones. If the Shaafi'i performs Witr in his way and the Hanafi in his way, what is the need for antagonism? Some of our friends are Shaafi'i Ulama for whom we have great respect and love. There is absolutely no ill-feeling, no sectarianism, no antagonism. But jahl (ignorance) is an evil disease.

It is not possible for laymen and even for the Ulama of today to deduct the laws of the Shariah from the Qur'aan and Hadith. You will be lost

and confused with the numerous different narrations and Qur'aanic verses seemingly contradicting one another. How will you as a lay person know the thousands of rules of the Shariah only by looking at translated versions of the Qur'aan and Hadith? Firstly, the innumerable ahadith on which laws of the Shariah are based are scattered in hundreds and hundreds of books. Even if we assume that you can build up a library with all the books of the Shariah, then too, without having acquired expert Islamic knowledge of the various branches of Ilm emanating from the Qur'aan and Hadith, never will you be able to formulate the correct rules. One Hadith will inform you that a certain act should be done in a particular way while another Hadith will say the direct opposite. How are you then going to reconcile the contradictions? Certain acts of worship, were in force in the initial period of Islam. Later Allah Ta'ala abrogated these rules and new ones were introduced to replace the old rules. How will you understand this and know which are the abrogated rules and which are the new laws to accept for practical purposes? In the Qur'aan there are certain verses which mention about laws which have already been abrogated. They are no longer applicable since Allah Ta'ala had revealed verses to cancel the rule/law although the recitation of the verses was retained. How will you know about such cancellations from a translation of the Qur'aan? The confusion can only be removed if you accept the interpretations and the expositions of the authorities of Islam. The first set of authorities was the Sahaabah who had acquired their knowledge directly from the Nabi (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). No one understood the Qur'aan and Hadith better than the Holy Companions of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). On the demise of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam), these Sahaabah spread out into the world and set up their respective Madrasahs (Institutions of Learning) in different places of the Islamic World. From all parts of the world people flocked to gain knowledge from the Sahaabah. Thousands of Muslims studied under the Sahaabah. Among them were the greatest Fuqaha, Muhadditheen and Mufasssireen.

These great Ulama who qualified under the Sahaabah belong to the Taabieen era, i.e. the age after the Sahaabah. These Students of the Sahaabah set up their own Madrasahs in various parts of the Islamic World and imparted the Knowledge of Islam to innumerable others.

Among their Students were Imaam Abu Hanifah, Imaam Maalik and numerous other great authorities of Islam. They all gained the Knowledge of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) which was narrated and transmitted by the Sahaabah. If anyone now wishes to differ with the meanings, interpretations and expositions of these great authorities of Islam, then he does so at the peril of his/her Imaan. The knowledge which has been reliable and authoritatively passed from one generation to another generation by expert Ulama down the passage of Islam's fourteen century history is thus the knowledge of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). No Muslim has the right to differ with this Knowledge. No Muslim has the right to offer an opinion which conflicts with the opinions and teachings of those who had acquired their knowledge from the Students of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) and the Students of the Sahaabah. If a person forms his own rules from studying a translation of a Qur'aan and some Hadith books, his conclusions are not the Shariah. His conclusions will be essentially his personal opinion. The Math-habs did exist during the time of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) and the Sahaabah. Although the names, Hanafi, Shaafi, etc. did not exist, the laws and teachings propagated by the Math-habs, all existed during the time of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). Deen is what was delivered to mankind by Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). The Shariah is not the product of the opinion of these great Imaams. The Imaams merely taught what they had acquired from their Mashaaikh (Masters and Ustaadhs) who had in turn acquired their knowledge from the Sahaabah. The differences which today exist among the various Math-habs in fact existed during the time of the Sahaabah. The Imaams did not teach anything new. Those who studied under Imaam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah alayh) became known as Hanafis. Those who studied under Imaam Maalik became known as Maaliki. But, it does not mean that these great Fuqaha taught anything other than what is in the Qur'aan and Hadith. It is simply that they became famous. Their Circle of Knowledge became wide and thousands from all parts of the world flocked to their Madrasahs to gain Knowledge. They can be likened with Institutions of Learning. For example, those who studied in the Islamic Institutions of Deoband in India are called Deobandis and those who gained their knowledge in Jamia Azhar in Cairo are called Azharis. But this does not mean that they are in error. If someone says

that they are in deviation because Deoband and Azhar did not exist during the time of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam), the claim will be absurd. Similarly, it is absurd to claim that those who follow Imaam Abu Hanifah, for example, are in error because he did not exist during the time of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). While he did not exist in that time, whatever he imparted did exist and was taught by Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) and the Sahaabah. The differences are not the consequence of their personal opinions. The differences we see in the Math-hab are on account of the differences among the Sahaabah, and their differences in turn are the result of the Teachings of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). All these differences are accommodated by the Qur'aan and Sunnah.

If one does not follow a particular Math-hab, undoubtedly, he/she will dwell into confusion. Such a person will not know what to do, how to act, what to accept and what to reject. He/she will be left to the wildly fluctuating vagaries of the nafs. One will pick and choose among the different narrations to suit one's fancies and opinions. One will then be following one's own desires under guise of Islam. One who does not follow a particular Math-hab is in danger of gravely compromising his Imaan.

The differences of opinion in the Math-habs are on account of different proofs which came to different Imaams. Also the same Qur'aanic verses and the same Ahadith which were delivered to the great authorities were understood and interpreted differently. Great minds do not think alike. There are bound to be differences in understanding and opinion. The very same thing applies to worldly matters as well. A government makes a law while different judges arrive at different verdicts about the very same law. Two advocates using the same law and principles interpret the law differently and each one seeks to defend his client utilizing the principles of the same law. For the differences in the Math-habs there are many such and similar reasons. These differences existed among the Sahaabah even while Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) was living. They would then come to Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) for resolving their differences. Sometimes Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) would uphold both opinions. Thus we find that later on when these Sahaabah went to different places they propagated their respective views which were

upheld and sanctioned by Nabi (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). Another basis for the differences is the fact that all the Sahaabah were not at all times in the company of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). At times some Sahaabah who had heard certain Ahadith went away to other places) not returning again or returning after a long while. In the meantime they may have propagated what they had learnt earlier on without even having heard of a later ruling which abrogated the earlier one. Even a great Sahaabi such as Hadhrat Umar (radhiallanhu anhu) did not have the knowledge of each and every Hadith. He sometimes issued a ruling based on a Hadith or on his understanding of an Aayat then a Sahaabi would come along and narrate a Hadith which he had heard from Nabi (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). In the light of the new information Hadhrat Umar (radhiallanhu anhu) would cancel his ruling and issue a new one based on the new information.

Among the Sahaabah there were many who were not Ulama. They were ordinary laymen, farmers, simple village-folk, labourers, etc. who did not interpret the Qur'aan and the Ahadith they heard either from Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) or other Sahaabah. However, they were under the instruction of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) to deliver and proclaim whatever they had heard from him. In fact, Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) had stated that many a time those who will be hearing the Hadith will understand it better than those who have delivered it. This was a reference to the illustrious Ulama among the Taabieen who heard Ahadith from Sahaabah who did not explain the statements. They merely recited the words of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) without expounding. The work of understanding and interpretation was thus left to the great and illustrious Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen. In such situations there were bound to be differences in interpretations and rulings. Consider the Hadith in which Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said that wudhu becomes incumbent after having ate food which was cooked. The literal words are, "What has been touched by fire" makes wudhu necessary. Although this Hadith is authentic and is accepted by all authorities, our Math-habs rule that wudhu is not incumbent after eating cooked food. But, there will be some Ulama who may have ruled that wudhu in fact is compulsory after eating cooked food since the text of the authentic Hadith is very clear and emphatic in this

regard. But the Math-habs citing different proofs from the Qur'aan and Hadith and practise of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) and the Sahaabah do not give a literal interpretation to this Hadith. Some other suitable meaning is attributed to the Hadith. The above is just one such example. There are numerous cases where the Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen had possession of authentic Ahadith of a conflicting nature without having a clear-cut ruling of the Sahaabah. In such circumstances they were compelled to study, understand and interpret the conflicting proofs on the basis of the Shariah and assign the ruling which they understood the best and which they felt convinced was the true and correct verdict. While one authority will understand such a conflict in narrations in one way, another will understand it in a different way. The question of strength of Hadith-transmission chains also played an important role in the rulings of the Fuqaha. A Hadith which reached Imaam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah alayh) may have been highly authentic on account of the short chain of narrators. Imaam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah alayh) may have heard the Hadith from highly authoritative Taabieen who had heard the Hadith directly from the Sahaabah. However when the same Hadith reached Imaam Shaafi (rahmatullah alayh) a century later, its chain of narration was considerably weakened on account of the many narrators which had crept into the Chain (Sanad) of Narration. Some of the narrators may not have measured up to the strict standards set by the later Muhadditheen, hence the Hadith would not have been used.

Besides these factors there are also other aspects which brought about differences of opinion among the Math-habs. But, although these all are the practical aspects underlying the differences of opinion, the actual cause is Allah's Will. Allah Ta'ala had intended the prevalence of academic differences in the Ummah. Hence, Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said: *"The differences in my Ummah are a Rahmat"*. Provided that the differences are based on the Qur'aan and Sunnah and motivated for the quest of the Haqq, there is absolutely no harm in such differences. It is for this reason that when in any given situation the specific ruling of a Math-hab cannot operate, the Muftis of a Math-hab will incorporate the ruling of another Math-hab of Haqq in the interests of the general Muslim community. Even in our present age, there are bound to arise differences among the Ulama on questions and

developments on which the Shariah has not issued any precise ruling. Consider the development of test-tube babies, performing Salaat on the moon, in an aeroplane, re-cycled water, injections and innumerable other developments which did not exist during the ages of Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam), the Sahaabah and the Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen. The Ulama will study these latest developments in the light of Qur'aanic and Hadith principles and search in the Kitaabs for similar situations. It is now then, clear that the research, knowledge, diligence, understanding and interpretation of all Ulama will not be alike. Some Ulama may rule that a certain development is permissible while others again will rule that it is unlawful. The same question will be haraam according to one authority and halaal according to another. The respective followers of the different Ulama will follow the verdict of their Ustaad or group of Ulama whom they have accepted as their guides in the Deen. These are spiritual matters which cannot be verified with tangible proofs. But even in practical sciences we find so much conflict and differences of opinion among the scientists inspite of the fact that physical things are readily accessible to those who make research on such matters. Different doctors after diagnosing a patient will come up with different verdicts and prescribe different forms of treatment. Yet, no one takes objection although the doctors may have studied in the same university under the same professors and did their housmanship in the same hospital under the same supervisors. The same applies to advocates, engineers and all other authorities in the practical sciences.

Aversion for the Islamic injunction of Taqleed is due to the ailments of self-conceit and self-opinion which in turn are the consequence of western liberalism and materialism. The impact of westernization has lamentably disturbed the mental balance of Muslims who suffered the misfortune of western education. The liberalistic attitude which has overtaken Muslims in these times is not a mariner associated with Imaan. Imaan is based on explicit obedience and following a transcendental Law which is termed the Shariah. Explicit obedience is termed 'Ittibaa' and explicit following is called 'Taqleed'. The aim of Taqleed is to achieve total 'Ittibaa'. Ittibaa' is total obedience to Allah and His Rasool. In relation to the masses this Ittibaa' is attainable only via the agency of Taqleed. And, the concept of Taqleed is in relation to

following the Aimmah Mujtahideen or the Jurists or Fuqahaa of Islam. It is only through this avenue of Taqleed that the Ummah can correctly attain 'Ittibaa' of Allah and the Rasul (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). Negation of Taqleed leads to negation of Ittibaa'. Ordinary Muslims, lacking in Islamic knowledge are deluded by the spiritually dangerous rhetoric and reasoning of the proponents of liberalism. The negators of Taqleed are at pains to convince Muslims that Taqleed is a superfluity and an accretion of no Islamic significance. But, Taqleed is imperative for the safety of Imaan. Eradication of Taqleed ushers one onto the brink of kufr. Those who shrug off Taqleed are perpetually exposed to the vagaries of wildly fluctuating nafsaani opinions and intellectual deficiencies. Non-Taqleed is, therefore, a cesspool of self-conceit.

The ghair-muqallid (one who does not subscribe to Taqleed) forever dwells in confusion and uncertainty. His Imaan suffers the worst batterings of scepticism and kufr. Baatil becomes his salient feature. He ultimately plods the path of kufr. Muslims cannot, therefore, afford the baneful and dangerous exercise of Adm-e-Taqleed (non-Taqleed). The fundamental importance of Taqleed may be gauged from the fact that the greatest Vanguard of Islam and Stars of Shar'i Uloom such as Imaam Ghazaali, Imaam Rhaazi and the numerous other illustrious Ulama of Islam were all Muqallideen (followers of Taqleed). They followed the noble Aimmah-e-Mujtahideen. Consider the case of Imaam Abu Yusuf and Imaam Muhammad. In Knowledge and Ijtihad they were next in rank to Hadhrat Imaam Abu Hanifah. In spite of the fact that these two Fuqaha were total Mujtahids, they nevertheless, made Taqleed of Imaam Abu Hanifah (rahmatullah alayh). If such men of superb knowledge discerned and acknowledge the imperative need for Taqleed, then who are the puny men of today who seek to abandon Taqleed? The realization for the need of Taqleed increases proportionately with the increase in knowledge. The greater one's knowledge, the more will one discern the need for Taqleed. On numerous occasions, a man of great knowledge is confronted with problems which defy his opinion and challenge his intellect. He is saved from the danger of deviation by seeking succour in the Taqleed of his seniors. Thus, no one can ever be independent of Taqleed. Taqleed is negated at the peril of destroying Imaan.